

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 OMB-01 NEA-10 AID-20 SCI-06

AEC-11 ACDA-19 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 PRS-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 DRC-01 /175 W

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R 181300Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8402

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT ALGIERS

USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 09389

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, NG

SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS ON NIGER COUP

1. SUMMARY: WHILE THE FRENCH SHOW SOME CONCERN ABOUT THE GENERAL EFFECTS OF THE NIGER COUP ON AFRICAN STABILITY, THEY DO NOT APPEAR TO BELIEVE THAT THEIR IMMEDIATE INTERESTS ARE THREATENED BY DIORI'S OVERTHROW. THEY CONSIDER HIS SUCCESSORS TO BE BASICALLY PRO-WESTERN. END SUMMARY.

2. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR FRANCOPHONE AFRICA
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REMOVILLE TOLD US APRIL 17 THAT THE COUP BY THE

NIGERIEN MILITARY WAS BASED ON THE ARMY'S DESIRE FOR BOTH GREATER "PURITY" IN GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND A GREATER SHARE OF POWER AND THE MATERIAL BENEFITS THEREOF WHICH THE ONE PARTY SYSTEM DENIED IT. THE COUP HAD BEEN CAREFULLY PLANNED BY THE MILITARY AND REMOVILLE SPECULATED THAT PRESIDENT DIORI MAY EVEN HAVE BEEN FOREWARNED ABOUT IT BUT DECIDED NOT TO RESIST. (FONMIN JOBERT IS REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD THE APRIL 17 MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS THAT "THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF THE SAHELIAN DROUGHT" PLAYED A PART IN THE NIGER CRISIS.) REMOVILLE CONFIRMED REPORTS OF MADAME DIORI'S HAVING BEEN KILLED WHEN SHE RESISTED HER WOULD-BE CAPTORS WITH A PISTOL AND SAID THAT THE ONLY OTHER DEATHS WERE DURING FIGHTING WITH THE PALACE GUARDS.

3. GIVEN FRENCH "FRIENDSHIP" WITH DIORI, REMOVILLE SAID INQUIRIES HAD BEEN MADE ABOUT HIM AND THAT THE FRENCH HAD BEEN ASSURED THAT HE AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT WERE BEING WELL TREATED UNDER HOUSE ARREST. HE IMPLIED THAT PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY'S ONLY OVERT REACTION TO THE NIGERIEN COUP HAD BEEN A SIMILAR INQUIRY TO NIGER'S NEW MILITARY LEADERS.

4. ACCORDING TO REMOVILLE, THE FRENCH HAVE A HIGH REGARD FOR LT. COLONEL KOUNTIE'S CAPABILITY AND HONESTY. HE IS CONSIDERED TRUTHFUL, STRAIGHT-FORWARD, HIGHLY-MOTIVATED AND BASICALLY PRO-WESTERN. WHILE NIGER'S EXAMPLE WOULD BE UNHELPFUL TO THE CONTINUING INFLUENCE OF MODERATE CIVILIAN LEADERS IN OTHER FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES AND TO AFRICAN STABILITY IN GENERAL, REMOVILLE BELIEVED THAT THE COUP WOULD NOT BE HARMFUL TO WESTERN INTERESTS IN NIGER. HE THOUGHT KOUNTIE'S STATEMENT OF A CONTINUED DESIRE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH FRANCE COULD BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 09389

5. REMOVILLE COMMENTED ON THE RELATIVE LACK OF REPERCUSSIONS TO THE COUP OUTSIDE NIGER, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE LIBYAN REACTION. HE SAID PRIME MINISTER JALLUD'S PLANE HAD NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO LAND IN NIGER. THE MOST STRIKING THING FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ARAB-AFRICAN RELATIONS, OBSERVED REMOVILLE, WAS THE FACT THAT ONLY TWO WEEKS AFTER HAVING SIGNED A MUTUAL DEFENSE AGREEMENT WITH NIGER, LIBYA HAD SHOWN ITS UNWILLINGNESS OR INABILITY EFFECTIVELY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACCORD. PRESIDENT
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MOKTAR OULD DADDAH HAD ALREADY COMMENTED WITH SOME BITTERNESS TO THE FRENCH ON LIBYA'S INACTION. DESPITE HOUPHOUET'S CERTAIN DISAPPOINTMENT AND SADNESS AT HIS FRIEND'S OVERTHROW, NEITHER IVORY COAST NOR ANY OTHER BLACK-AFRICAN COUNTRY MOVED A FINGER TO AID DIORI SINCE TO DO SO WOULD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED TO BE INTERFERENCE IN AN INTERNAL MATTER.

6. REMOVILLE SAID THE FRENCH ARE FOLLOWING THEIR

USUAL POLICY OF RECOGNIZING STATES AND NOT GOVERNMENTS AND THAT DAY-TO-DAY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE NEW NIGERIEN LEADERS AND THE FRENCH WILL BE CONTINUED. HE INDICATED THAT TWO OR THREE AIRLIFTS OF RELIEF ASSISTANCE HAD BEEN DELAYED BECAUSE OF THE CLOSURE OF NIAMEY AIRPORT BUT EXPECTED THERE WOULD BE NO APPRECIABLE CHANGE IN FRENCH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. HE THOUGHT ONE OF THE FIRST SUBJECTS THE FRENCH WOULD TAKE UP WITH THE NEW REGIME WOULD BE THE STALLED URANIUM NEGOTIATIONS.

7. A RELIABLE SOURCE CLOSE TO FRENCH COOPERATION OFFICIALS INDICATES THAT ACCORDING TO AN AS YET UNCONFIRMED RUMOR, THE COUP LEADERS HAVE APPROACHED ONE FORMER MINISTER, MAI MAIGANA, TO SEEK HIS COOPERATION WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT.
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